

Applicant/Serial No.: Haruhiro Watanabe / 10/624,168
Filed/Conf. No. 07/21/2003 / Conf. No. 6365
Examiner/Group: Michael S. Lowe / 3652
Amendment mailed: 12 / 08 / 2005
Attorney File: MM0721US (#90326)

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A method of transferring articles to and from an article handling section, using a self-propelled carriage capable of travelling along a fixed path, the carriage comprising a movable body moveable in a longitudinal direction with respect to a carriage body, a turnable body turnable about a vertical axis with respect to the movable body, and an article supporting body disposed over the turnable body, said method comprising the steps of:

halting the self-propelled carriage alongside the article handling section;

performing initial turning of the turnable body about the vertical axis causing a front end of the article supporting body to face the article handling section;

moving the movable body whilst turning the turnable body about the vertical axis, positioning the front end of the article supporting body substantially right at a lateral side of the carriage body to face the article handling section;

performing a transfer of an article between the article supporting body and the article handling section; and

causing the article supporting body to perform a reverse operation returning the article supporting body over the turnable body.

2. (previously presented) A method of transferring articles to and from an article handling section, using a self-propelled carriage capable of travelling along a fixed path, the carriage comprising a movable body moveable in a longitudinal direction with respect to a carriage body, a turnable body turnable about a vertical axis with respect to the movable body,

and an article supporting body extendable and retractable with respect to the turnable body, said method comprising the steps of:

halting the self-propelled carriage alongside the article handling section;

causing the article supporting body to make an extending movement;

performing initial turning of the turnable body about the vertical axis causing a front end of the article supporting body to face the article handling section;

moving the movable body whilst performing intermediate turning of the turnable body about the vertical axis, and causing the article supporting body to make a retracting movement;

performing final turning of the turnable body about the vertical axis, positioning the front end of the article supporting body substantially right at a lateral side of the carriage body to face the article handling section;

performing a transfer of an article between the article supporting body and the article handling section; and

causing the article supporting body to perform a reverse operation returning the article supporting body over the turnable body.

3. (currently amended) A self-propelled carriage comprising a movable body capable of moving in a longitudinal direction with respect to a carriage body, and moving means, said movable body comprising a turnable body turnable about a vertical axis, and turning means having an article support body mounted over said turnable body, wherein:

the movable body performs a longitudinal movement whilst the turning body performs a turning movement ~~at least partially~~ in a synchronised manner.

4. (currently amended) The self-propelled carriage according to claim 3, wherein a cover member for covering the article supporting body is located on top of the carriage body such that ~~at least~~ a portion of said carriage body is turnable in unison with the turnable body, and the cover

member comprises a fixed cover section located on the front end of the carriage body, a sliding cover section capable of sliding with respect to the fixed cover section and a movable cover section located in a turnable manner in unison with the turnable body.

5. (previously presented) The self-propelled carriage according to claim 3, wherein the article supporting body is a fork device extendable and retractable in forward and backward directions.

6. (previously presented) The self-propelled carriage according to claim 4, wherein the article supporting body is a fork device extendable and retractable in forward and backward directions.

* * *